

that there exist people who will never attain Buddhahood is in clear contrast to the "One Vehicle" teachings (*ekayāna*), according to which everyone has a Buddha nature and will eventually become emancipated. It was Śīlabhadra who transmitted the Vijñānavāda theory of Dharmapāla to Hsüan-tsang. Although Śīlabhadra was 106 years old when Hsüan-tsang met him, he taught the Vijñānavāda theories to Hsüan-tsang for about five years. Hsüan-tsang in turn transmitted Dharmapāla's theory to K'uei-chi (632–682), who founded the Fa-hsiang sect in China.

A notable doctrinal disputation between Śīlabhadra and Jñānaprabha (unattested; Chin., Chih-kuang; Jpn., Chikō) was held at Nālandā. Fa-tsang (643–712) gives an account of this conflict in his works *Hua-yen ching t'an-hsüan chi* (T.D. 35.111c–112a), *Shih-erh-men lun tsung-chih i-chi* (T.D. 42.213a, b), and *Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun i-chi* (T.D. 44.242a–c). This account was related to him by Divākara, an Indian Dharma master and translator, at the Ta-yüan Ssu in Ch'ang-an.

The topic of the debate was the "three times," or "three steps," of the Buddha's teaching. Śīlabhadra, who was of the Vijñānavādin line based on the *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra* and the *Yogācārabhūmi*, expounded the Three Steps as follows: (1) the teaching of the Hīnayāna principles regarding the Four Noble Truths and the emptiness of the self (*pudgalanairātmya*), (2) the teaching of the imaginary nature of things (*parikalpitasvabhāva*) and the emptiness of things (*dharmānairātmya*), and (3) the teaching of "consciousness only" (*cittamātra*). On the other hand, Jñānaprabha, who was of the Mādhyamika (Madhyamaka) line based on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Mādhyamika śāstras*, interpreted the Three Steps as (1) the teaching of the "Lesser Vehicle" (Hīnayāna), (2) the teaching that the external world does not exist but that the mind does, and (3) the teaching that neither the external world nor the mind exists. Each thinker regarded the third step as the highest. It is interesting that this ideological difference was stated so clearly by the seventh century, because we find the same kind of hermeneutical discussion later in Tibetan Buddhism, in the *Drañ nes legs bśad sñiñ po* of Tsoñ-kha-pa, for example. Unfortunately, as there are no sources other than Fa-tsang's report regarding this conflict between Śīlabhadra and Jñānaprabha, its historical credibility remains uncertain. In Hsüan-tsang's biography, for example (T.D. 50.261a, b), Jñānaprabha appears as a disciple of Śīlabhadra, and there is no mention of this doctrinal dispute.

The only extant work by Śīlabhadra is the *Buddhabhūmividyākhyaṇa* (a commentary on the *Buddhabhūmi*

Sūtra). This work is preserved in the Tibetan canon (Derge edition no. 3997; Peking edition no. 5498).

[See also *Yogācāra and the biographies of Dharmapāla and Hsüan-tsang*.]

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MIMAKI KATSUMI

SILENCE is one of the essential elements in all religions. It lies behind the words, supports the rituals, and shapes the way of life, whatever the actual words, rituals, and way of life may be. And precisely because it does so much and appears in so many unexpected places, we perceive it rather as the blind men perceived the elephant: it is much too big for us to understand fully, and if we grasp one part firmly, we miss a great deal more. One obvious reason for this is that ours is a highly verbal culture: "to understand" has come to mean "to be able to explain in words." To try to understand something that by its nature cannot be put into words requires some mental gymnastics.

A major source of the problem, however, is that—insofar as we can talk about it at all—the term *silence* covers several distinct states. It can be environmental, communal, or personal; if personal, it can be external or internal, something one does or something one is, or some mixture of all of these. There is nothing intrinsically "religious" about these basic types of silence. They appear in characteristic ways in the various religious traditions, but ultimately they have a place in religion simply because they occur wherever human beings are organized in groups.

Yet there is also a silence specific to religion, and it presents a further difficulty. Human silence is useful and may therefore be defined and discussed; although it is a negative state, a state of nonwords, it has clearly beneficial functions. Mystical or divine silence, however, cannot be used but can only be experienced; those who have done so insist that there is nothing of deprivation in it, but rather a fullness beyond words. Such

silence—in form so like, and in essence so unlike, everyday silence—has no place in mundane reality, and therefore bewilders the mind.

Environmental Silence. Is a quiet environment necessary for the exercise of silence? Certainly, monasteries were first established far from the noise of civilization, in the jungles of India and the deserts of the Middle East, and quiet country is still the preferred location for contemplative communities. It is also true that non-monastic religious groups for whom silence is important, such as the Old Order Amish, prefer rural to city life. One of the early Christian monks was even amazed to find that some younger brothers had built their cell near a bed of reeds. "When one who is living in silence hears the song of a bird, his heart no longer has the same peace," the old man exclaimed. "How much worse it is when you hear always the rustling of those reeds" (*Sayings of the Fathers: Alphabetical Collection*, Arsenius, 25). On the other hand, John Climacus, the late sixth-century author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, a classic work of Christian ascetic literature, declared that "the beginning of *hēsuchia* [Greek for "silence"] is to throw off all noise as disturbing for the depth of the soul. And the end of it is not to fear disturbances and to remain insusceptible to them" (27.5).

In an increasingly noisy world, the question is still being debated in those communities for whom silence is important. Personal silence can be inviolable; environmental silence is easily destroyed. Any group will have some members who can maintain their peace anywhere, but more who require quiet around them.

Communal Silence. The main purpose of communal silence is to facilitate the maintenance of silence by individual members—especially those novices who are still easily tempted to talk—but it has other uses, too. All arguments that begin "Why did you do such a stupid thing?" are stopped before they start if personal questions are never asked. Should a quarrel break out nevertheless, silence can be an effective gesture of forgiveness. And a misdeed confessed, repented of, and covered thereafter with perfect silence is the more easily forgotten.

Traditionally, communal silence has been made up of the environmental silence surrounding the community and the personal silence of its members. Yet it is something more than the sum of these two. As John Hostetler observes in his study *Amish Society* (Baltimore, 1980): "Silent discourse prevails where people are deeply involved with one another. The collective awareness is developed to such an extent that it becomes a religious experience, and it can be neither uttered in sound nor communicated in words" (p. 374). This bonding quality of silence is especially strong in those communities that

use silent group meditation. In a real, albeit inexplicable, way, the silence draws the members together and makes the many one.

Personal Silence. In developing personal silence, the first stage is learning simply to keep one's mouth shut. The initial lesson is usually taught in childhood by the harassed mother who says, "Sit in that corner and don't make another sound!" In maturity, the struggle for silence becomes more intense. Abba Agathon, an early Christian monk, held a pebble in his mouth for three years until he learned thoroughly to hold his peace; Pythagoras imposed on new disciples five years of total silence. Few monasteries are so severe. Usually, total silence is required only in specific places or at specific times—East and West are agreed, for example, that silence must be maintained in the refectory—otherwise, necessary conversations are allowed, although not encouraged.

Silence is sometimes imposed as a punishment. *Luke* 1:5–25, 57–80, records the story of the Jewish priest Zachariah, who is struck dumb by an angel when he questions the amazing message that his aging wife Elizabeth will bear a son whom they are to name John. (He recovers his voice ten months later at the boy's circumcision.) Most of the time, of course, silence is imposed much less dramatically and thoroughly. The *Rule of Saint Benedict* specifies that a brother guilty of a lesser fault may continue to sing the divine office but must be silent outside of chapel. One who is guilty of a grave fault, however, may use his mouth only for breathing and eating. The Old Order Amish turn the Benedictine practice around: an unrepentant sinner is "shunned"; he may remain at home and talk as he wishes, but no one may speak to him, nor may baptized Amish eat at the same table with him. The Quakers, who use silence as an effective group response to persecution and as a public protest as well as for worship, have also developed it into the gentlest form of correction. In their traditional, unstructured meeting for worship, anyone so moved is free to rise and speak. Sometimes, however, a speaker goes on after inspiration has ceased. If this continues, one of the elders—a "weighty Friend" respected by all—may rise quietly and simply stand there, gaze lowered. Usually this brings the speaker at once to his senses, and he joins in the silence.

Thus silence reflects the intent: used harshly, silence becomes harsh; used with love and concern, it reveals the failing without condemnation and provides space for the individual to overcome his fault. Moreover, silence is an ever accessible form of self-discipline, and hence an essential practice for the spiritual aspirant, even when there is no overt sin. Silence allows God to speak directly to the heart, and it allows the person

to overcome human pettiness and to depend directly on God.

In time, the stillness of the mouth penetrates the mind and heart, and the person becomes silent within. This is a primary goal of the monastic regime, but it need not be such only for monks. In the fourteenth century, hesychasm as elaborated by Gregory Palamas was officially endorsed by the Eastern Orthodox church; Palamas stressed that unceasing prayer flowing from internal silence was commanded of all believers.

Inner silence is also necessary for attaining wisdom. Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) declared in his *Three Books on the Duties of the Clergy*: "Now what ought we to learn before anything else, but to be silent, that we may be able to speak? . . . It is more difficult to know how to be silent than how to speak." 'Aqiva' ben Yosef, writing two hundred years earlier, observed: "The fence of wisdom is silence" (*Avot* 3.17). "Guard your tongue in youth," advised the Lakota chief Wabashaw, "and in age you may mature a thought that will be of service to your people!"

Wisdom itself, and the teaching of it, are rooted in silence. This is seen clearly in the vision quest of the Algonquins. Whenever a young man sought the vision that would direct and give meaning to his life, he would leave his people to fast in solitude and silence. In the silence the Spirit would come and speak to him.

Even in the more literary religions, the disciple's inner silence mirrors the absolute silence from which God's word emerges. *Exodus* 20 relates how God proclaimed the Law: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me." While he was speaking, "the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off, and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.'" The Talmudic tractate *Shabbat* gives the comments of three rabbis on this passage. The first taught that before fear overcame them, the people had been able to hear no more than the first two words, "I am the Lord." According to the second, they heard only the first word, the divine name, "I am." The third held that the people heard only the first letter of the first word, *alef*, which is silent.

It is possible so to grow in silence that, after years of maintaining silence by effort, one comes to *be* silent. At this point the personality is integrated and the passions are calmed. One gains insight into what is really going on, along with knowledge of the next necessary step, and the unexpected may happen. The Zen master Rinzi used to help students stuck on a *kōan* by screaming suddenly at them. Startled, their minds would make the necessary leap. Rinzi called the scream "silence," and

the early Christian Desert Fathers would have agreed with his choice of terms. From them comes the teaching that one man says nothing, yet is never quiet, while another speaks from morning till night, yet maintains perfect silence.

John Climacus, looking at the question from the other side, wrote that "a discerning hesychast will have no need of words, because he expresses words by deeds" (*The Ladder* 27.4). This saying the Buddha demonstrated when a philosopher once asked him, "Without words, without the wordless, will you tell me the truth?" The Buddha kept silent. Since real silence is beyond both words and wordlessness, by this answer the philosopher was freed from delusion.

From the early Christian monastic tradition comes the story of a pilgrim who went into the desert to see two of the great fathers, Abba Arsenius and Abba Moses. He was taken first to Abba Arsenius who, because he then lived in total silence, would not so much as look at him. Discomfited, the pilgrim rose quickly and was led to Abba Moses, who received him kindly, entertained him as well as was possible in that desolation, and sent him away in peace. Afterward, his guide asked, "Which of the two do you like better?" The visitor replied, "To my mind, the one who gave us a good welcome and a good meal seems the better."

A saintly father heard of this, considered it, and prayed: "Lord, reveal this to me, I pray: how is it that one man for Thy sake withdraws from all sight and speech of men, while another for Thy sake is a good fellow with all?" He saw the answer in a vision of two boats floating: in one were Abba Arsenius and the Holy Spirit, sitting together in peace and silence, while in the other was Abba Moses with the angels of God, who were popping honeycomb into his mouth.

Mystical Silence. "We learn silence from the gods, speech from men," Plutarch observed. Isaac the Syrian (late seventh century) agreed: "Speech is the organ of this present world. Silence is the mystery of the world to come." The one who has patiently struggled through the dry, tiresome stages of forced silence comes at last into a radiant peace, a blessed stillness that is too beautiful for words, too full for speech.

It does not seem to matter greatly whether the silent one believes that he is experiencing union with the Holy Trinity or with *brahman*; in all religious traditions the blissful silence appears to be the same. Nor does it seem to matter whether one tries to talk about the experience of silence in the context of Islam or that of Buddhism: in all traditions it appears to be equally impossible. Here the maxim "He who speaks does not know, he who knows does not speak" necessarily holds true.

Of the mystical value of silence, Abū Yazīd al-Bis-

ṭāmī, the ninth-century founder of the ecstatic school of Sufism, once said, "No lamp I saw brighter than silence, no speech I heard better than speechlessness." This is, perhaps, all that can be said.

[See also *Spiritual Discipline; Meditation; and Language, article on Buddhist Views of Language.*]

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ELIZABETH McCUMSEY, C.H.M.

SILVER. See Gold and Silver.

SIMEON BAR YOHAI. See Shim'on bar Yoh'ai.

SIMEON BEN GAMALIEL II. See Shim'on ben Gamli'el II.

SIMEON BEN LAKISH. See Shim'on ben Laqish.

SIMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN. See Symeon the New Theologian.

SIMONS, MENNO (1496–1561), Dutch priest, the major northern European leader of an Anabaptist group that later came to be known as the Mennonite church. His firm leadership and numerous writings helped to consolidate the pacifist wing of early Dutch Anabaptism and to make it normative, after the ill-fated attempt of some to establish the kingdom of God by force in the northern German city of Münster in 1534–1535.

Simons was born of peasant stock in Witmarsum, in the province of Friesland, in 1496 and was enrolled in a monastic school at an early age. Since Friesland was dominated by the Premonstratensian Order at that time, and since Simons was installed in 1524 by that order as a priest in Pingjum as well as in his home parish of Witmarsum in 1531, we may assume that he was a member of that order and received his training in it, perhaps in the nearby monastery of Vinea Domini. The

order was known for its excellent libraries and the emphasis it placed upon education.

Simons's religious struggle began early in his career as a priest, in connection with his celebration of the Mass. His doubts about the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine indicate that Reformation ideas had reached Friesland. He wrote later that he had searched the writings of the reformers in vain for answers to the question of infant baptism, which became his second concern. His problem with the Mass was most likely inspired by the antisacramental movement in the Netherlands, as well as by Erasmian humanism and the teachings of the Brethren of the Common Life. Questions about the validity of infant baptism may have arisen when Simons heard that an Anabaptist tailor named Sicke Freerks had been publicly executed in nearby Leeuwarden for having himself baptized a second time, but it appears also that Simons had already encountered literature on the subject before this event.

In his search for answers Simons eventually turned to the scriptures, which he had apparently not read during his days as a student at the monastery. Yet he must have held the scriptures to be a significant authority, for he expressed deep disappointment at not finding in them the kind of support he felt necessary for the practice of the Mass and infant baptism. He continued to serve in his priestly office, but his new studies must have begun to change his emphasis, for by 1528 he had become known as an "evangelical preacher." According to Simons's own account, his spiritual pilgrimage was a gradual transition, lasting eleven years, from a routine reliance on tradition to a deep personal faith in Christ and reliance on the scriptures as final authority in matters of faith. Gradually his views became known, and by January 1536 he had found it prudent to go into hiding. He used this time for spiritual exercises and writing. After nearly a year had elapsed he accepted a call from a representative Anabaptist delegation to be the spiritual leader of the scattered groups of believers. He was baptized and ordained by Obbe Philips. Sometime during this interim period Simons also married a woman about whom we know little more than that her name was Gertrude.

Simons's personal and theological point of departure was the new birth. His first major treatise, entitled *The Spiritual Resurrection* (1536), was followed a year later by a restatement of this theme under the title *The New Birth* (1537). This emphasis on conversion occurs centrally in his subsequent writings, particularly when he refers to his own spiritual struggle before 1536.

Intimately related to this theme was his emphasis on the nature of the church. Simons was convinced that the church had fallen from its apostolic purity in both

doctrine and life. Reformation of the present structures was no longer possible; a new beginning patterned after the church in the Bible was called for. This was, in large part, the content of his three writings of 1539: *Foundation of Christian Doctrine, Christian Baptism, and Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing*. Grace and ethics were to go hand in hand. The true church is the bride of Christ and must, therefore, be without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27). Simons did not believe in sinless perfection, but rather that Christians must help each other achieve the fullness of life in Christ through both faith and obedience.

This vision of the church, as well as cultural acceptance and economic prosperity, led to a dynamic witness at all social levels. But it also led to numerous divisions that were to trouble the later years of Simons's work. Because of these tensions, many of his writings came to be unduly defensive and polemical. Circumstances, and his co-workers, forced him into a harsher stand on excommunication and the ban (exclusion from membership) than he had taught earlier.

The doctrine of a pure church also forced him into polemical exchanges with Reformed theologians and others on his view of the incarnation. A pure church required a pure Savior. Hence Simons believed that Jesus had received both his divine and his human nature directly from God, and that Mary was as passive as a glass of water through which a ray of sun passes. Although this Christology of heavenly flesh was not new by that time, and was also taught by others, it brought ridicule to Simons as he tried, with increasing bitterness, to defend the doctrine.

Simons led a harried and persecuted life. In 1542 a bounty of one hundred guilders was offered by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500–1558) for his capture; this did not seriously disrupt his travels, even though some who had given him lodging and food were executed. His journeys extended from Friesland to the Cologne area, and east to Danzig (present-day Gdansk). He was eventually permitted to settle in Holstein, north-east of Hamburg, perhaps because he had broken with earlier Anabaptists in expressing his belief that a Christian could also be a magistrate, provided that he lives in obedience to Christ. Extensive writings continued to flow from his pen and press in Holstein until his death on 31 January 1561.

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CORNELIUS J. DYCK

SIN. For discussion of the Mesopotamian moon god, known in Akkadian as Sin, see Nanna.

SIN AND GUILT. The human being, as *homo religiosus*, is a creature that worries. His worrying is both his burden and his distinction. In the dark age of his mutation to *Homo sapiens*, at the turning point between animality and humanity, his intuition of the presence of the numinous around him tipped the balance toward humanness. As soon as this ape could stand on his feet, his glance could lift itself from the earth, the source of food, and direct itself toward the stars, that is, to a sphere higher—not only spatially—than that of the satisfaction of his bodily needs and functions. In this way man discovered the universe and, concomitantly, the existential problem of his place in the cosmos, assigned to him by some power, for some particular reason, toward some goal. He thus invented an entire mythical universe in answer to the questions evoked by his fundamental anxiety.

Mircea Eliade has shown time and again that the central characteristic of myth is a narrative of origins. If one knows how things started and why they went awry, one finds some kind of solace, as does the patient when he learns from his physician the name of his disease. This reassurance is, however, partial at best: the essentials for living are the most precarious for man among all the creatures of the earth. Reflecting on the origins of his human condition, man came inevitably and universally to the conclusion that this present life is not what it was meant to be by the god(s) *in illo tempore*. In short, from being anxious, man became unhappy, stricken with guilt feelings about an initial accident that is repeated endlessly throughout human existence and can be called "sin."

Sin and guilt, however, come in a great variety of shades, according to the various sensitivities represented by the great number of religious and philosophical feelings and systems. In this article the classification of the different approaches to the issue is of primordial importance. I shall attempt to distribute the material from a phenomenological point of view, starting with the cosmological apprehension of man as surrounded by taboos and continuing with the tragic conception that to live at all is a sin. In a second major